THE
Dan Smoot Report

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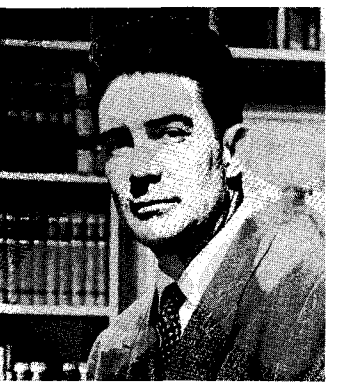

DAN SMOOT

WAR AND POLITICS — 1964

In the fall of 1962, President John F. Kennedy and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, campaigning for congressional candidates pledged to support new frontier policies, often met cold and hostile audiences. The President of the United States was even booed by Americans outraged at the administration's illegal use of military force in the state of Mississippi, while doing nothing to protect our nation's vital security interests against communism in Cuba.[1] On October 5, 1962, Vice President Johnson defended the administration's gentle policy toward Cuba by saying that the United States jumping on Cuba would be like a big man beating his wife and then boasting about it — saying that Americans who recommended a blockade of Cuba had "more guts than brains."[2]

Seventeen days later, however, President Kennedy, perceiving that the new frontier was in political trouble because of its Cuban policy, abruptly announced a blockade of Cuba (calling it a "quarantine"). The President said he had just discovered (what astute observers had known for two years) that the Soviets had established, in Cuba, missile sites with a capability of striking the heartland of the United States.[1]

At the time, it was obvious that the announced "quarantine" was a hoax. We did not stop or search any communist ships to determine whether they were hauling missiles in or out of Cuba. We made no on-site inspections to determine that missiles had been removed. We merely took Khrushchev's word that the missiles were being removed.

It was also obvious—even officially admitted—that Washington officialdom was lying to the American people. On October 29, 1962, Arthur Sylvester (Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs) admitted that the administration was giving the public false information about Cuba. He called the practice proper "management" and "control" of the news.[3]

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Nonetheless, the administration was widely praised for taking a firm stand in Cuba and "forcing Khrushchev to back down." The attitude of the voting public was affected. New frontier Senators and Representatives, who had been on the verge of political defeat, were successful in the general elections on November 6. On November 20, 1962, President Kennedy announced that the Cuban quarantine was being lifted immediately, because Khrushchev had promised to take "offensive" weapons out of Cuba. There was no hint, in the President's tone or words, about the reliability of a Khrushchev promise—although, less than a month before, in his pre-election announcement of the quarantine, the President had called Khrushchev's ambassador (and, thus by inference, Khrushchev himself) a liar.[4]

Later, the obvious became apparent to all willing to face facts: instead of taking a strong stand *against* communism in Cuba, our government had made harmful concessions *to* communism (in Cuba and elsewhere),[5] in exchange for widely publicized sabre-rattling that had had such a well-timed effect on American elections.

1964 Rerun

On May 4, 1964, the Hearst Headline Service distributed from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, a news story which said:

"Seven of the U. S. Army's Elite Special Forces soldiers are prisoners of the Red guerrillas in South Vietnam and there is no evidence of any effort to rescue them.

"Reports reaching the United States reveal that some of the Americans have been seen in the hands of the Viet Cong in the Mekong River Delta.

"According to these unconfirmed reports, the soldiers are being paraded through villages of the Campu Peninsula as prizes of war. They are being led by rope tied about their necks, it is said; and at least one of the Americans is in bad physical condition as a result of his ordeal.

"Hope for all of the seven fades with each new day of the brutalizing indignity. Two were captured in October, four in November, and one in March.

"It is an old Viet Cong trick, used by them on other Americans captured by the Pathet Lao and their Viet Cong advisors in Laos. It is calculated to break a man, physically and psychologically.

"Officials at special forces headquarters here, on Ft. Bragg's Smoke Bomb Hill, refused comment. Persistent questioning brought out, however, that the two officers and five enlisted men are officially listed at the Pentegon as prisoners of war and believed to be still alive.

"There is bitterness and grumbling among special forces soldiers here about a reported refusal by 'higher authority' to let their comrades in Vietnam carry out a rescue strike mission to save those men whose whereabouts are known.

"One young special forces veteran, who spent six combat-filled months in Vietnam, put it this way:

" 'If we don't go grab those guys out of the bag, they're going to die, and their death will be on the hands of all Americans. Some of those people are my friends. I soldiered with them, and I'd gladly fly back out there right now to help get them.

" 'Who the hell are the Viet Cong, anyway? They're not nine feet tall. They're not even five feet tall. What kind of a country is this — with all our power, letting a bunch of half-pint, two-bit guerrillas do a thing like this to us?'

"Henry Cabot Lodge, the U. S. Ambassador in Saigon, has initial responsibility . . . . It is up to him and his military chief . . . to decide whether to approve such things as a rescue mission.

"However, Lodge could solicit guidance from Washington, thereby shifting the responsibility to Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. In that event, they would probably turn to the National Security Council, which would directly involve President Johnson — where the buck-passing stops."[6]

On June 22, 1964, General Paul D. Harkins (then in charge of the U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) replied to questions about rescuing our soldiers from communists in Vietnam. General Harkins said:

"Immediately following the receipt of information on 29 October 1963 that three U. S. military personnel were missing and reportedly captured,

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ground and air operations were mounted in an attempt to recover these personnel. Leaflets were dropped announcing rewards to anyone bringing in the Americans. Rewards were also offered to any Vietnamese unit recovering these men. Subsequent reports of sightings of U. S. prisoners were followed up by ground and air reconnaissance. Unfortunately, these operations terminated with negative results.

"Following the reported capture of four U. S. personnel on 24 November 1963, the same type operations were conducted . . . . Again rescue attempts were unsuccessful . . . ."[7]

Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester made a statement saying substantially the same thing: efforts to "rescue" our captured soldiers in Vietnam consist of dropping leaflets and offering rewards.[8]

Like the war in Korea, the war in South Vietnam is waged from the American side with self-imposed limitations against *provoking* the principal enemy. Communist guerrillas are trained in communist North Vietnam, by communist China and the Soviet Union. By land, by Soviet airlift, and by sea, troops and supplies from North Vietnam are moved into Laos. Communist troop and supply centers in Laos, though on the border of South Vietnam, are off limits, out of bounds, for South Vietnamese, because Laos is "neutral."

From their safe bases in Laos, communist guerrillas have a choice of hundreds of trails for raids across the border into South Vietnam. They terrorize villages, kidnap peasants for training and service in communist armies, confiscate or destroy supplies and equipment vital to the military and to the civilian population of South Vietnam, kill South Vietnam troops (and, when possible, their American advisers). When they meet opposition, communists retreat along jungle trails to safety, in "neutral" Cambodia or "neutral" Laos—privileged sanctuaries where American policy will not permit them to be followed, or their supply bases attacked.

The United States trains, equips, supplies, and pays the salaries of South Vietnam military forces, and has approximately 15,000 of our own officers and men serving as technicians and advisers, and as operators of American equipment. Often in extreme danger zones and in the thick of combat, Americans are under strict orders from their own government not to fire at the communist enemy, unless they are first fired upon.

There have been many reports (answered by administration denials that seem very unconvincing) that American soldiers (particularly airmen) get obsolete and inadequate equipment,[9] while (through our foreign military assistance) we give better materials to foreign nations, many of them "neutralist" to the point of open enmity against us. Some of our finest military officers are assigned to South Vietnam combat forces as advisers; but they can only advise. South Vietnamese officers often ignore American advice, with disastrous results.[10]

South Vietnam commanders seem reluctant to engage the enemy in ground combat—as unwilling to inflict casualties on communist forces as to sustain casualties themselves. Hence, they rely too much on "sophisticated American weaponry."[10] Bombardment (with American planes and weapons) of South Vietnam villages (which have been occupied by communist guerrillas), often kills women and children—doing greater harm than the communist guerrillas do.[10]

Consequently, there is growing hatred of Americans throughout the rural areas of South Vietnam. One American, a resident of several years, reports that children in the villages—who used to wave happily at Americans—now turn their backs when they see Americans.[10]

A principal sea route, by which Soviets and Chinese communists send supplies to communist guerrillas in South Vietnam, is the Tonkin Gulf—an arm of the South China Sea, washing the shores of North Vietnam and communist China.

Since early 1963, a few U. S. naval units have patrolled in Tonkin Gulf. Their exact mission has never been made clear. Official announcements from Washington indicate that they stay in international waters (outside the three-mile limit which the U. S. recognizes as territorial waters

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of nations bordering the Gulf). Apparently, they are intended to conduct some sort of "surveillance"[11] of communist supplies being shipped to South Vietnam guerrillas — though there has never been any indication of effort to stop such shipments. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how our Navy could close the Tonkin Gulf sea traffic in supplies to guerrillas in South Vietnam, since the traffic is in small vessels which hug the shore, well inside the three-mile limit which our vessels avoid.

On July 15, 1964, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona was nominated Republican candidate for President. One of many reasons for Goldwater's massive public support is that millions of Americans are sick of the policy (initiated by Truman in Korea, and continued by Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson) which involves our sons in foreign wars, prohibits them from using the best tactics and weapons to win the wars, and, when they are captured, abandons them to humiliation, torture, and death. It was obvious that defeatist policies in Vietnam would become a damaging campaign issue against President Johnson in the elections this year. Something had to be done.

On Sunday morning, August 2, 1964, the U. S. destroyer *Maddox* was on patrol in Tonkin Gulf, 30 miles off the coast of North Vietnam. Three small high-speed torpedo boats (bearing no markings but later identified by administration spokesmen in Washington as North Vietnamese PT boats, made in the Soviet Union) approached the *Maddox* in what obviously was an attack maneuver. The PT boats did not stop when the *Maddox* fired shots across their bows. The U. S. aircraft carrier *Ticonderoga,* patrolling nearby, sent planes to help, the pilots under instructions not to fire unless they, or the *Maddox,* were fired upon.[12]

One, or more, of the three attacking PT boats fired upon the *Maddox* with three torpedoes and a fusillade of 37-millimeter shells. All missed. Our destroyer escaped damage or casualties. Answering fire from the *Maddox* and from U. S. Navy F8 jet fighters from the *Ticonderoga* hit all three attacking boats, sinking one, damaging the other two.[9]

Fortunately, the *Maddox* is one of relatively few U. S. Navy destroyers which have been permitted to keep their gun power. Newer ships are armed chiefly with missiles, which many naval authorities consider inadequate equipment. These Navy professionals are concerned about the decline of gun power in U. S. fleets. North Vietnam is believed to have at least 50 high-speed craft, which can operate in shallow coastal waters, and which are armed with small-caliber guns and torpedoes. Communist China may have as many as 400 such boats. The United States has neglected new construction of such craft; and the Tonkin Gulf affair underscores this deficiency.[13]

On Monday, August 3, President Johnson summoned reporters to the White House office and read the following statement:

"1. I have instructed the Navy to continue the patrols in the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of Vietnam.

"2. To double the force by adding additional destroyer to any one already on patrol.

"3. To provide a combat air patrol over the destroyers.

"4. To issue instruction to the combat aircraft and to destroyers:

"A. to attack any force which attacks them in international waters.

"B. to attack with the objective of not only driving off the force but of destroying it.

"These instructions were conveyed yesterday to the appropriate people and they will be carried out."[14]

American forces in Korea were, and those in South Vietnam are, handicapped by orders which prohibit them from following attacking communist aircraft, in "hot pursuit," into communist territory if necessary, when the communists run for privileged sanctuaries. Neither the White House, the Defense Department, nor the State Department would say whether President Johnson's "shoot-to-kill" orders of August 3 permit Americans to follow in hot pursuit.[15]

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On August 3, 1964, the State Department announced that it would send a protest to the North Vietnamese government, warning of "grave consequences" if more unprovoked attacks were made against U. S. military forces. The U. S. destroyer *C. Turner Joy* was sent into Tonkin Gulf to reinforce the *Maddox,* and the U. S. carrier *Constellation* was moved in from Hong Kong to join the *Ticonderoga.*[12]

On August 4, 1964, an undetermined number of North Vietnamese PT boats attacked the *Maddox* and the *C. Turner Joy* in the Tonkin Gulf, about 65 miles off the coast of North Vietnam. The American vessels, with air assistance from the *Ticonderoga* and *Constellation,* repulsed the attacks. On specific orders from President Johnson, American planes from the carriers made 64 sorties against North Vietnamese shore installations. Four PT boat bases, approximately 25 PT boats, and one major oil storage depot were destroyed. Two U. S. planes were shot down. One pilot was presumed dead, the other presumed captured.[12]

Late on the night of August 4 (while our attacks on the shore installations were in progress) President Johnson spoke to the nation on radio and television, telling of the attacks, and disclosing that he would ask Congress to pass a resolution "making it clear that our government is united in its determination to take all necessary measures in support of freedom . . . in Southeast Asia."[16]

On August 7, 1964, the House of Representatives (by a vote of 414 to 0) and the Senate (by a vote of 88 to 2) passed a resolution which says:

"The Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as commander in chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."[17]

Many political observers concluded that the Tonkin Gulf affair had "dampened" the major Republican issue in the forthcoming presidential election. A member of the House of Representatives Republican Policy Committee was quoted as saying "[Mr. Johnson] has done it to us again."[18]

Many who have studied closely the record of Lyndon B. Johnson believe he would do *anything* to help his election this fall—even contrive a war, if necessary. It is conceivable that Johnson could arrange with Khrushchev (who understands the importance to communism of keeping Goldwater out of the White House) a sabre-rattling confrontation, in which Khrushchev would "back down" on election eve, to make Johnson seem a hero to Americans. Many believe the Cuban "crisis" of 1962 was so arranged, between Washington and Moscow, for its effect on American elections.

There were only two votes in Congress against the Southeast Asia "unity" resolution—both cast by liberal Democrats in the Senate: Senators Wayne Morse of Oregon and Ernest Gruening of Alaska. Senator Morse said the resolution gave President Johnson "blanket authority to wage war."[17] Senator Gruening said:

"All Vietnam is not worth the life of a single American boy."[17]

U. S. Representative Bruce Alger (Republican, Texas—one of the best constitutional conservatives in Congress) voted for the resolution—saying, however, that he had "grave reservations" about "congressional abdication of responsibility in declaring war." He agreed to the resolution "only assuming that Congress will not be bypassed later," before the United States is further involved.[19]

Though Senators Gruening and Morse generally support everything I consider unconstitutional and harmful to my country, I must agree that "all Vietnam is not worth the life of a single American boy," and that the resolution is a "blanket authority to wage war"—a dangerous action which Congress should not have taken. I think conservatives were wrong to support the resolution in the interest of "unity."

If our performance in the three major wars of this century has not proved to the world that this country will unite (despite politics) to fight a

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war—certainly no resolution of Congress will prove it.

The important thing is for us to *avoid war*. We cannot avoid war (whether we get "tough" or remain "soft" about communist aggressions and atrocities) if we continue the policy of world-meddling—saddling this nation with the responsibility of defending all other nations. Many of them do not want to be defended. They accept our "defense" merely because their ruling cliques are growing rich on our money, or using it to keep themselves in power — or because our military assistance to some makes others feel a need for American war material.

None of these nations, however, will ever use what we give them to fight communists if we again become involved in a major war with a major communist power. And become involved we will, if we continue the policies which date from the latter days of the Roosevelt administration (and which caused our involvement in the Korean war).

A lead editorial, entitled "Firmness in the Right," in the August 6, 1964, issue of *The Dallas Morning News,* heaped praise on President Johnson for being "firm but not rash, rough but not belligerent, courageous but not impulsive" in handling the Tonkin Gulf affair. The editorial concluded with this sentence:

"Whether there is conflict or peace is in the hands of barbarians who have no regard for humanity and its highest aspirations."

Exactly! Our role as world-supporter and world-defender has taken from our hands the decision of war or peace. That decision now rests with the rulers of other nations—many of whom are "barbarians"; many of whom are reckless adventurers; many of whom, like the communist dictators of China, have absolutely no regard for human life, not even the lives of their own people. Indeed, it is quite conceivable that Chinese communist dictators might choose war as a means of eliminating some of their surplus population, and hiding other domestic problems.

What To Do

Our government has no constitutional authority to defend or support any portion of the foreign world. Whether other nations "go communist" is no affair of ours. Our aid to them certainly will not *prevent* their turning to communism, or succumbing to communist conquest. Indeed, our "aid" has assisted communist subversion and conquest in many lands.

We cannot prevent other nations from warring on one another, and we have no business trying. We could keep our own nation out of war, however, if we would maintain such *national* defenses that none would dare touch us—and if we would return to the traditional American foreign policy of benign neutrality which George Washington laid down in 1796.

We never should have become involved in Asian wars. Once involved, however, we should have taken the victory that many times was in our hands. We rejected every golden opportunity for victory. At every critical juncture since our involvement in Asia, U. S. political leaders have taken the wrong turn. There is really nothing left for us to do but to get out, and improve our own national defenses, to protect our own national interests. Otherwise, inevitably, we shall become embroiled in another catastrophic cycle of that East-West war between Europe and Asia which has been raging, one way or another, with intervals of calm, for 1500 years.[20]

How, specifically, should we pull out of Asia? Our involvement with regard to China has been sealed by the blood of Americans who have died at the hands of communists. Moreover, our national honor is involved. It is doubtful that China would have been enslaved by communism, or that the Korean war would have occurred, had it not been for communist-appeasement policies followed by the U. S. State Department since Roosevelt's first wartime conference with Stalin.

Chiang Kai-shek is the only strong anti-communist leader left in Asia. Those who know him well say he is a devout Christian and a great lead-

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er—his life dedicated to one purpose: rescuing his homeland from communists. He was 76 on October 31, 1963. Although he is still vigorous, it is obvious that his time is running out. If he is held in check until too late for him to accomplish his great purpose, it may then be too late for China and all the rest of Asia. Free Chinese on Formosa have been living and building on the hope that they will be permitted to move against the mainland when the time is ripe. It is inconceivable that the time will ever be any riper than now.

Since Chiang retreated to Formosa, our aid to his government has averaged about 270 million dollars a year: 100 million in economic aid (chiefly, surplus agricultural commodities); and 170 million in military aid (much of it equipment which U. S. Defense Department officials consider obsolescent). Does it make sense for us to keep supporting the free Chinese as American wards, though we never let them fight our common enemy? Ultimately, total war or total surrender will be the outcome.

We could give Chiang Kai-shek and the world six-months' notice that we plan to get out and let Asians fight their own wars in their own way. During that interval, we could gather military and civilian goods which we are now scattering all over the Far East (to nations which will never use them to help us fight communism), and divert these supplies to Chiang Kai-shek, giving him our blessing to move with his own men, as he pleases, to rescue his homeland.

Some military authorities say that Formosa is vital to our defenses. This is true if, by *our defenses,* we mean the defense of Asia. If we continue to shoulder the defense of Asia, fighting her wars with our soldiers, we must anticipate that Asia will become a limitless graveyard for our sons. If that is the policy which we are determined to continue, we should hold on to every base and every piece of real estate we have anywhere in the Pacific, and acquire more — at whatever cost.

But why continue that policy? Neither the military security nor the economic prosperity of our nation requires us to defend any part of Asia; and our government has no right to spend American lives or money for such purpose. Bankruptcy and death await us unless we disengage from involvement in the political and military affairs of the rest of the world, and look to our own national defense.

What if Chiang Kai-shek fails after we pull out of Asia? One thing we can be sure of: if there are not enough Asians willing and able to fight for their own freedom, then Asia cannot be saved. No matter how many American lives our political leaders may be willing to sacrifice in the jungles, desert, hills, and rice paddies of Asia, we simply do not have enough men to fight Asia's wars for her.

The one remaining strong, determined anti-communist leader in Asia says *he* wants to fight — now. Now is the time for us to let him.

WHO IS DAN SMOOT?

Born in Missouri, reared in Texas, Dan Smoot went to SMU getting BA and MA degrees, 1938 and 1940. In 1941, he joined the faculty at Harvard as a Teaching Fellow, doing graduate work for a doctorate in American civilization. From 1942 to 1951, he was an FBI agent: three and a half years on communist investigations; two years on FBI headquarters staff; almost four years on general FBI cases in various places. He resigned from the FBI and, from 1951 to 1955, was commentator on national radio and television programs, giving *both* sides of controversial issues. In July, 1955, he started his present profit-supported, free-enterprise business: publishing *The Dan Smoot Report,* a weekly magazine available by subscription; and producing a weekly news-analysis radio and television broadcast, available for sponsorship by reputable business firms, as an advertising vehicle. The *Report* and broadcast give *one* side of important issues: the side that presents documented truth using the American Constitution as a yardstick. If you think Smoot's materials are effective against socialism and communism, you can help immensely—help get subcribers for the *Report,* commercial sponsors for the broadcast.

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Corrections

On page 235 of the July 27, 1964 *Report,* "The American Civil Liberties Union," I said: "Bisbee (an alien agitator) was being deported because of involvement in illegal activities of the subversive IWW." The sentence should have read: "Bisbee's alien agitators were being deported because of involvement in illegal activities of the subversive IWW."

On page 238 of the same *Report,* U. S. Representative Neil Staebler is identified as being from Minnesota. Representative Staebler is from Michigan.

* * * * *

Note

The pocketsize edition of *The Invisible Government* is not yet off the press; but we are still hoping to make deliveries by the end of August. Orders received first will be shipped first, as soon as possible.

FOOTNOTES

(1) For a detailed discussion of the fall, 1962, capaign, see this *Report,* "War and Politics," October 29, 1962.

(2) UPI dispatch from Albuquerque, N. M., *The Dallas Times Herald,* October 6, 1962, p. 8A

(3) AP story from Washington, *The Dallas Morning News,* November 1, 1962, Section 1, p. 8

(4) "The Men Who Lied About Soviet Missiles," *U. S. News & World Report,* November 5, 1962, p. 15

(5) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report,* February 1, 1963, p. 128; UPI dispatch from Washington, *The Dallas Times Herald,* February 14, 1963, p. 6A; "Washington Whispers," *U. S. News & World Report,* February 3, 1964, p. 19

(6) "7 Captured Yanks Mistreated by Reds," by Warren Rogers, *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner,* May 4, 1964, p. A2

(7) Letter, General Harkins to C. R. Nichols, Atlanta, Ga., dated 22 June 1964

(8) Release Number 471, Fighting Homefolks of Fighting Men, Glenwood Springs, Colo., dated July 9, 1964

(9) *U. S. News & World Report,* May 11, 1964, pp. 40-2; UPI story from Washington, *The Dallas Morning News,* May 13, 1964, Section 1, p. 1

(10) For a discussion of the Vietnam war, see this *Report,* "Vietnam and Lodge," April 27, 1964.

(11) AP story from Washington, *The Dallas Times Herald,* August 5, 1964, p. 40A

(12) "Bigger War For U. S. In Asia?", *U. S. News & World Report,* August 17, 1964, pp. 21-8

(13) *The New York Times,* August 5, 1964, p. 3

(14) Special to the Times Herald from Washington, *The Dallas Times Herald,* August 3, 1964, p. 1A

(15) AP story from Washington, *The Dallas Times Herald,* August 4, 1964, pp. 1A, 9A

(16) "Text of Johnson's Report," AP dispatch from Washington, *The Dallas Morning News,* August 5, 1964, Section 1, p. 3

(17) AP from Washington, *The Dallas Morning News,* August 8, 1964, Section 1, p. 1

(18) AP story from Washington, *The Dallas Morning News,* August 6, 1964, Section 1, p. 13

(19) "Alger Reserved On Backing LBJ," *The Dallas Morning News,* August 8, 1964, Section 1, p. 9

(20) For a detailed discussion of American involvement in Asia, see this *Report,* "Our Asian Wars," May 11, 1964.

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